
FY' 16

**PLANNING
AND
ZONING**

**STRATEGIC PLAN
&
FISCAL YEAR 2015
WORK PROGRAM**

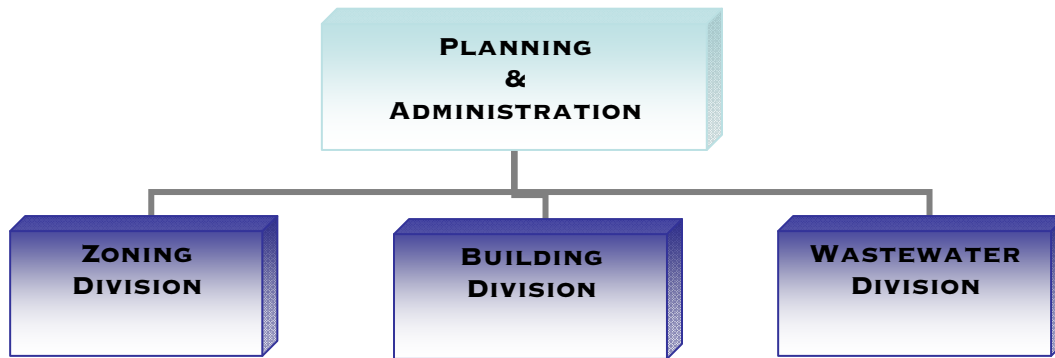


**DEPARTMENT
OF
PLANNING
&
ZONING**

TOWN OF COLCHESTER, VERMONT

Introduction & Organizational Structure

The Colchester Department of Planning and Zoning provides regulatory oversight to construction and development within the community as well as quality of life and environmental concerns. The department's activities are comprised of four major divisions: zoning, building, wastewater, and planning and administration.



Zoning Division

Objectives

Zoning is a regulatory authority of land use and development as derived from the police powers of the state. Colchester first adopted zoning in 1955. The zoning division is responsible for reviewing and processing development applications in conformance with the town's various land use regulations and plans. Under Title 24 of Vermont Statutes Annotated, Chapter 117 a municipality may choose to adopt local zoning, as the town of Colchester has. Without local zoning, all construction and development would be subject to state land use permits also known as Act 250. As the State of Vermont does not have home rule, the town must follow the requirements of 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117 if it is to implement zoning. These requirements include but are not limited to:

- 1) The adoption of a five year municipal land use plan;
- 2) Adoption of zoning and subdivision regulations;
- 3) Reviewing development and construction for compliance with the plan and regulations through the zoning permit and certificate of compliance process;
- 4) The establishment of an Appropriate Municipal Panel (Development Review Board) for reviewing subdivisions, site plans, conditional uses, variances, and appeals of the Administrative Officer (Zoning Administrator);
- 5) Enforcement of zoning permits, land use regulations, and Development Review Board decisions;
- 6) Issuing formal decisions regarding the interpretation of land use plans and regulations, and

7) Assisting the public, applicants, and appellants with zoning inquiries.

Activities

The zoning division is staffed by two full-time employees: the Zoning Administrator and the Assistant Zoning Administrator. The Assistant fulfills the role of Zoning Administrator upon the Administrator's absence or request. The work of the zoning division falls under the following major activities:

- 1) Zoning permits and Certificates of Compliance;
- 2) Development Review Board applications;
- 3) Enforcement;
- 4) Transcribing of minutes from the Development Review; and
- 5) Financial accounting for the department.

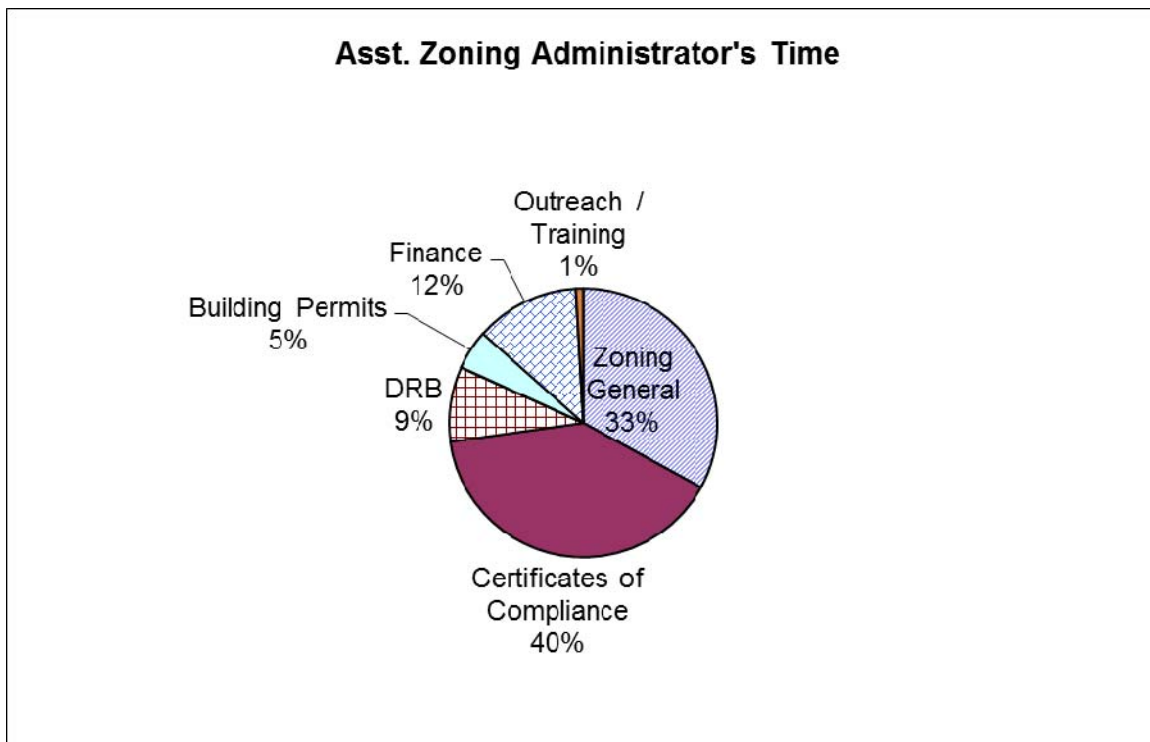
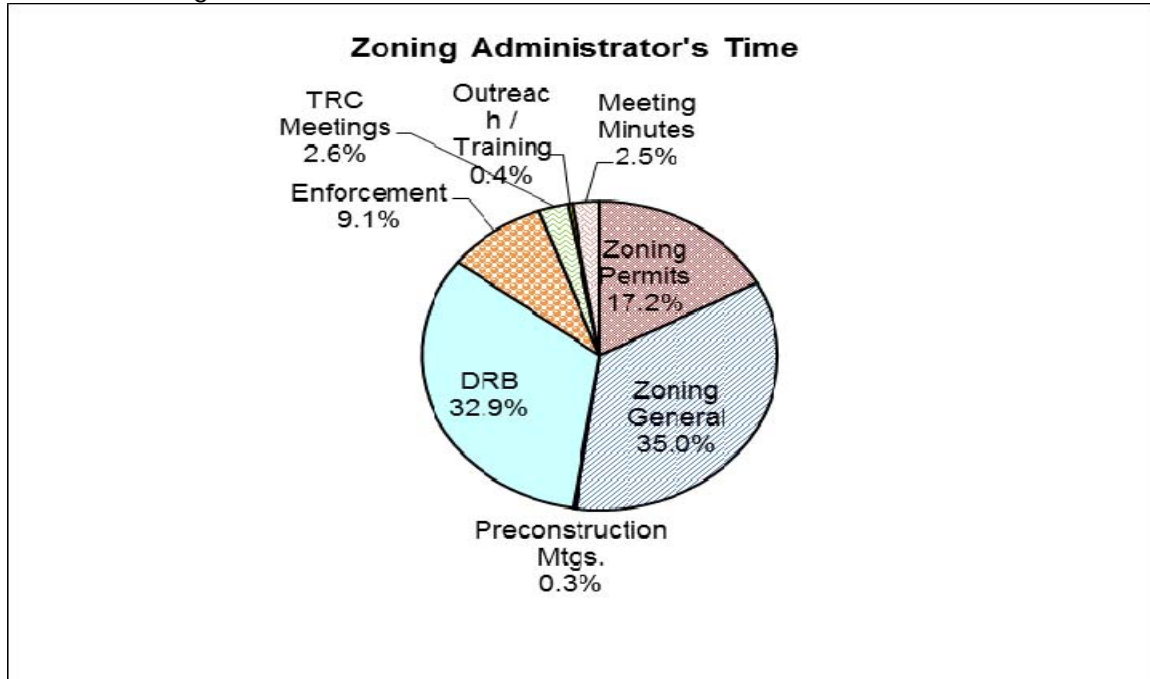
The first four activities are required for conformance with 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117. The fifth activity is an extension permitting activity as monthly reports on construction starts are required to be provided to the Select Board, Census Bureau, and private firms upon request. The Zoning Administrator provides oversight to all of these activities except financial accounting which is under the direct supervision of the Director. The Zoning Administrator also staffs the Development Review Board in its functions including the transcription of DRB minutes. The Assistant Zoning Administrator takes the lead in the issuance of certificates of compliance and administering the receipt ledger and departmental monthly reports. These monthly reports on permit and development activity must be provided to the Select Board as required in Title 24, Chapter 83, Section 3106.

Allocation of Resources

Below are charts of activities performed by the Zoning Administrator and Assistant Zoning Administrator for fiscal year 2014. The time spent on Building Permits and Zoning General was increased for both of these positions as it was required that they both help fulfill the duties of the Administrative Assistant due to a vacancy and hiring freeze. Certificates of Compliance exceeded revenue and volume expectations again and subsequently increased the time dedicated to process from the Assistant Zoning Administrator. Several work items such as monthly reports and software implementation were deferred to attend to permits and other time sensitive items. It is hoped that 2015 will see a decrease in time spent on Building Permits and Zoning General for these two positions and deferred work items such as monthly reports will become timelier.

Training is necessary to perform these activities. Examples are attending Vermont League of City and Towns or similar organizations for seminars on current case law, changes to State Statute, best practices, etc. The chart of activities includes training time however it is also categorized with outreach activities. It is estimated that the Assistant Zoning Administrator should have up to 20 hours of training annually and the Zoning Administrator 20 to 40 hours

annually. The target was met for the Assistant Zoning Administrator but not for the Zoning Administrator due to time constraints.



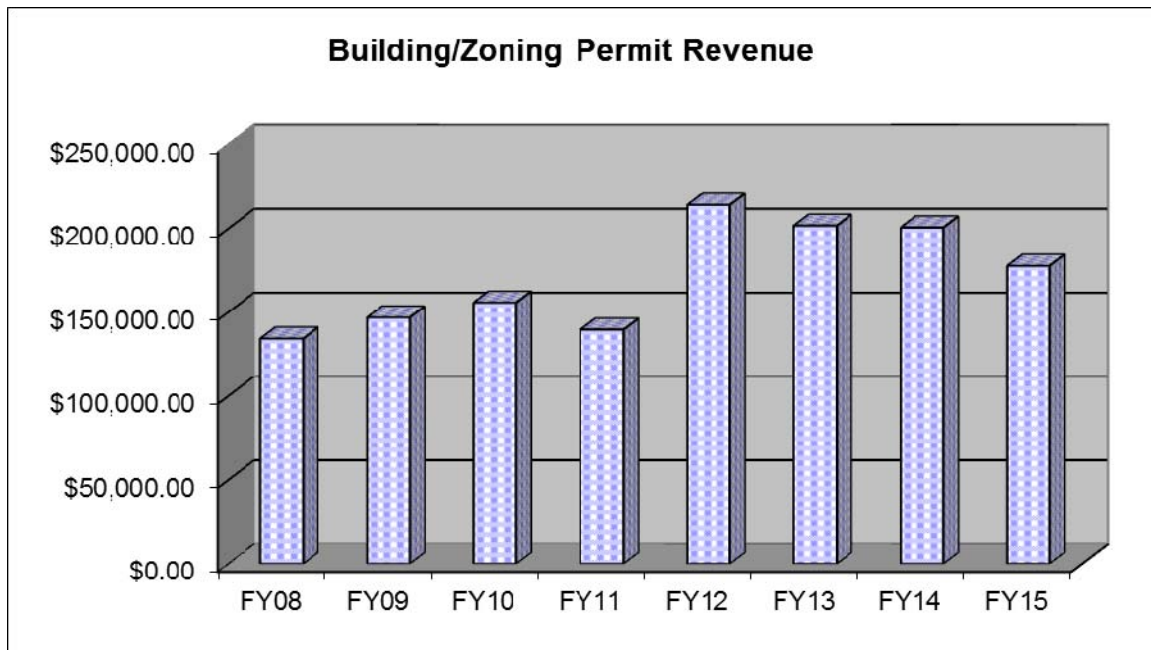
Revenue Sources

The first two activities (issuance of zoning permits / certificates of compliance and Development Review Board approvals) generate revenue through application fees, recording fees, and impact fees where applicable. These

permit applications also include revenue to reimburse the town for third party legal reviews and state mandated legal notices in a local publication. Enforcement activities often result in fines or the reimbursement of legal fees incurred by the town. It is hard to distinguish the revenue of zoning permits from the revenue of building permits as the Department combines these permits into one application and one fee. These revenue accounts are listed in the town's general fund at the following:

- 100002-341301 Building / Zoning Permits
- 100002-341300 Accessory Apartment / Seasonal Conversion Permits
- 100002-341304 DRB Legal Notices
- 100002-341305 DRB / Boundary Line Adjustment Applications
- 100002-341307 Certificates of Occupancy (and Compliance)
- 100002-351002 Planning & Zoning Fines

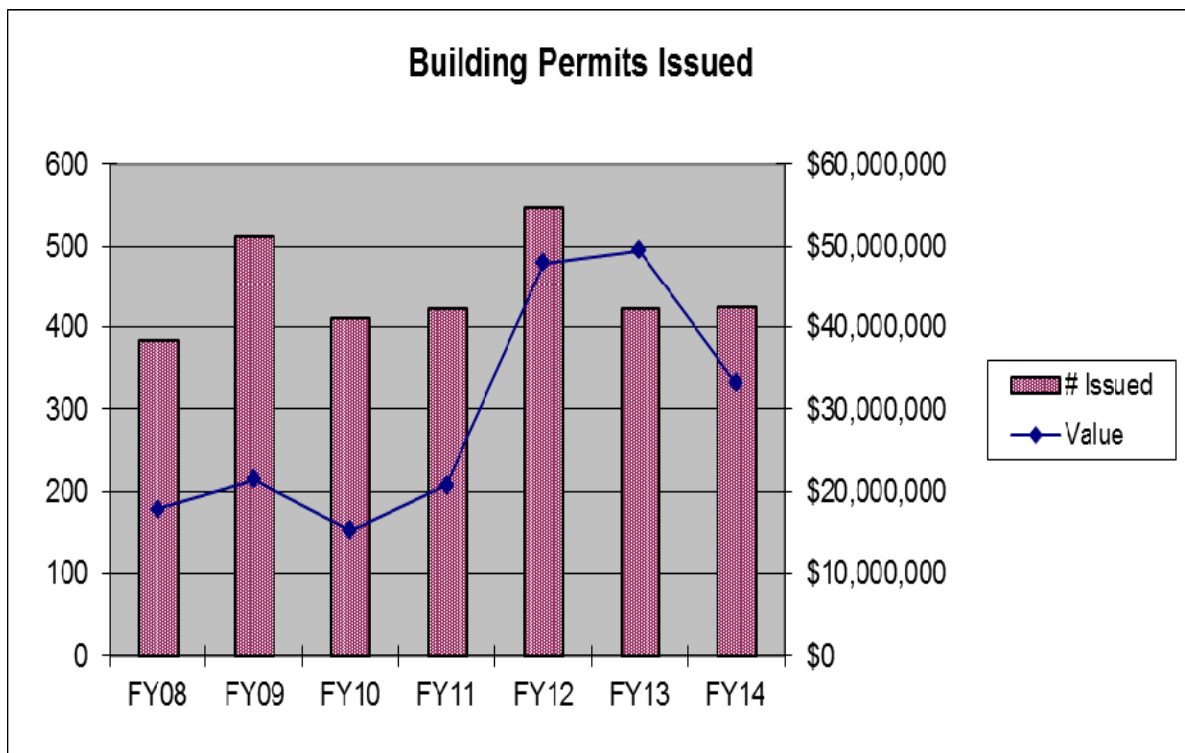
The following charts represent the actual revenue received in these revenue accounts for the preceding six years as well as the projected revenue for fiscal year 2015. Based upon the results of fiscal year 2014, it is likely that the building/zoning permit revenue will exceed the projected estimate. It should be noted that permitting fees will be revisited in 2015 and may further skew projections if implemented during 2015.



Building permits have trended toward an increase in value of permits with fewer permits issued. Fiscal year 2012 saw an abnormally high number of permits issued with the recovery from the lake flood of May 2011 as well as an increase in value with a new office building begun on Water Tower Hill. In the preceding years, many developers began site work on projects but delayed construction of units as the market remained soft. This trend is also reflected

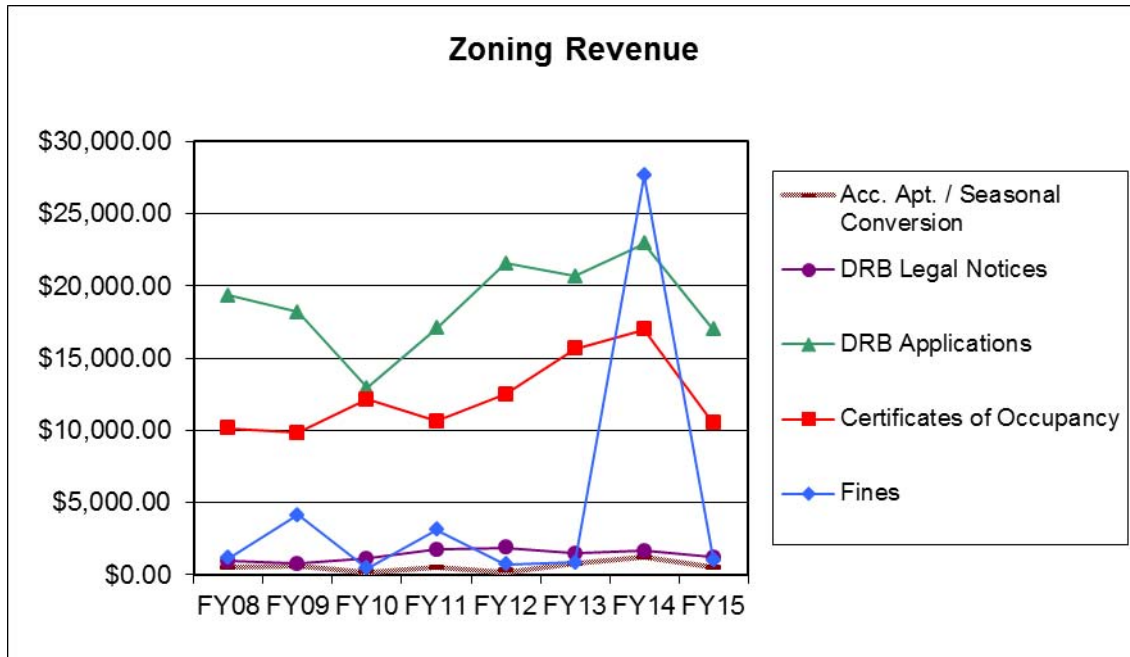
in the number of building permit versus site work inspections quantified under the building division. Fiscal year 2013 brought the resurgence of new single-family dwellings and a strengthening commercial sector. Several large commercial projects were permitted in fiscal year 2013 that resulted in increased values. Fiscal year 2014 saw essentially the same number of permits and permit revenue as 2013 however a decrease in construction value as high value buildings such as new Class A office space and institutional buildings such as the new dorms at St. Michaels College were not duplicated.

Permit revenue is expected to remain level in 2015 as residential construction remains strong. Construction value will continue to fluctuate with varied commercial starts. The projected building permit revenue for fiscal year 2015 is likely to exceed previous expectations and mirror the previous two years at approximately \$200,000.



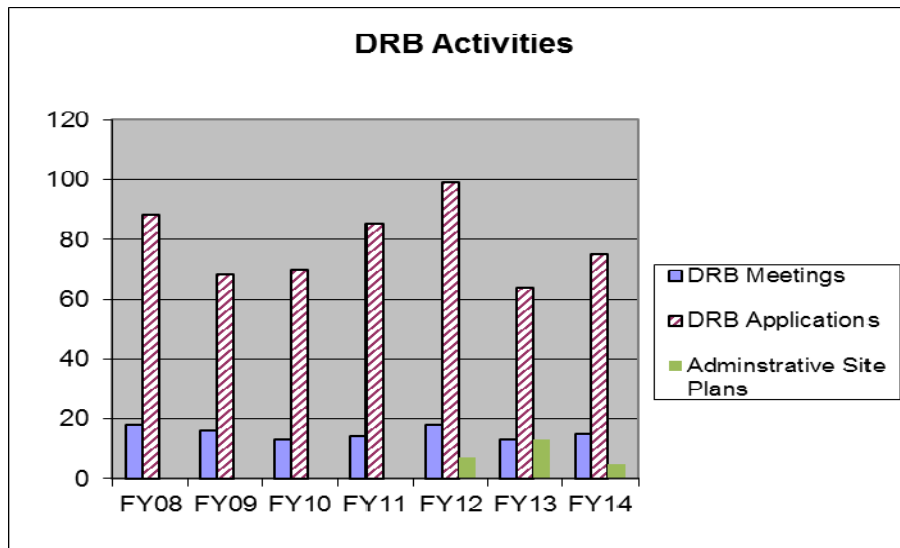
Requests for Certificates of Compliance continue to remain high although residential refinancing has decreased. The trend toward more requests for Certificates of Compliance may be attributed to higher standards enforced by banks on the loan process. It is anticipated that this revenue line will remain strong into fiscal year 2015. It should also be noted that DRB applications peaked in fiscal year 2012 due to many variance and site plan for seawall applications due to the lake flooding in May 2011. While the number of DRB

applications has diminished, revenue has remained strong reflecting a trend of fewer variance and seawall applications in favor of larger subdivision and site plan applications. In 2014 a one-time fine payment created a large spike in revenue that is not likely to be duplicated in subsequent years.

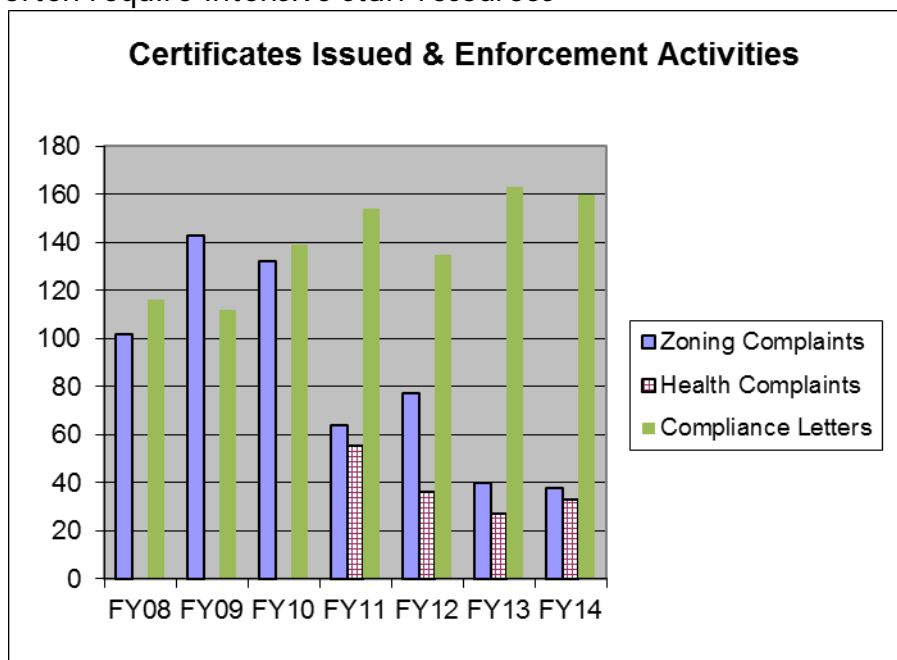


Metrics for Efficiency & Output

The efficiency and output of the zoning division can be measured in several areas. The department quantifies building and zoning permit activity by the number of permits issued and value of construction. Development Review Board (DRB) applications are quantified in the number of applications processed and the number of DRB meetings held.



Certificates of compliance, occupancy, and updates are tracked by volume. Zoning violations and complaints are logged by the case and not by the hours to resolve or the severity of the violation. In the chart below, the number of inspections related to complaints is charted as opposed to the number of actual complaints. In 2014 there were 73 zoning complaints however only 38 required inspections with the majority resolved through a phone call or a letter. The number of complaint appears to be leveling out with roughly the same number of complaints in 2013 and 2014. The Department has worked extensively to resolve continual complaints, such as condemned buildings, and has taken a more proactive role in enforcement. While these efforts have a positive impact on quality of life in the community, enforcement is revenue negative and can often require intensive staff resources



The metrics of the zoning division are often mandated by Title 24 of Vermont Statutes Annotated, Chapter 117. A chart showing the various time requirements and steps for issuing permits (activities one and two) and the appeal period afforded by right as part of enforcement activities has been created by the Vermont Land Use Education and Training Collaborative:



The zoning division has and will continue to comply with the metrics required for the processing of zoning permits, appeals, and violations as required by 24 V.S.A Chapter 117. Each violation investigation begins within 24 hours of the complaint. While each enforcement action requires differing amounts of time to investigate (site visits or legal research may be necessary), once a violation has been determined, the process set forth in state statute takes precedence. Each entity against which enforcement action is taken is allowed 15 days to appeal the decision before the Development Review Board (DRB), similar to a permit denial. If an enforcement matter proceeds beyond the DRB to the Environmental Court, the Court's calendar then dictates the timeline for resolution. Minutes for Development Review Board are required in Title One of the Vermont Statutes Annotated, Section 312(b) to be available for review and copying within five days of the meeting.

Fiscal Year 2015 Priorities

The department's new permitting software was implemented in 2014 with further refinements still underway in 2015. The new software has required substantial resources to implement with many customizations necessary which has forestalled the implementation of the public portal by which customers apply online for permits. Fiscal year 2015 will see the migration of the Development Review Board process to the new software with applicants able to apply to the Board online and track permits. This migration will continual to occupy staff time in 2015 with efficiencies and time savings realized more long term. The following time is anticipated from the zoning division to achieve the FY14 objectives. Priorities for the zoning division will include:

1. Continuing to fulfill the requirements and metrics as required by 24 V.S.A Chapters 83 and 117 as well as Chapters Four and Seven of the Colchester Code of Ordinances

Estimated Project Completion: On-going

A. Certificates of Compliance: Asst. Zoning Administrator 650 hours

B. Development Review Board Applications & Staffing (includes TRCs & Preconstruction mtgs.):

Asst. Zoning Administrator 150 hours

Zoning Administrator 580 hours

C. Zoning General (file research, responding to inquiries):

Asst. Zoning Administrator 500 hours

Zoning Administrator 530 hours

D. Building Permits: Zoning Administrator 260 hours

E. Enforcement: Zoning Administrator 140 hours

2. Software Implementation

Involved Staff: Zoning Administrator 54 hours;

Asst. Zoning Administrator 167 hours

Estimated Project Completion: On-going

3. Finance:

*Estimated Project Completion: On-going
Asst. Zoning Administrator 150 hours*

Building Division

Objectives

The building division administers the Town's building code and fire prevention, protection, and life safety regulations as codified in Chapters Four and Seven of the Colchester Code of Ordinances. Under Title 24 of Vermont Statutes Annotated, Chapter 83 a municipality may choose whether to adopt building and fire codes, as the town of Colchester has. Without these codes, construction of public buildings (commercial and multi-family or rental residential) would be reviewed only broadly by the State through its Division of Fire Safety. Other construction would not be subject to any standards or code. The town currently has over 2.5 million square feet of commercial property and close to 7,000 dwellings, of which the majority are owner occupied. These regulations are more explicit than the zoning regulations. While zoning specifies the types of uses allowable in generally areas, Chapters Four and Seven specify the method and type of construction permissible, as well as prescribe the minimal fire access standards. The town has had building regulations since 1960. The fire prevention, protection, and life safety regulations were implemented through a substantial revision to Chapter Seven of the Colchester Code of Ordinances on November 22, 2005.

Similar to the zoning regulations, the Town derives its power to implement building and fire code from the State as codified in Title 24, Chapter 83 of Vermont Statutes Annotated. This Chapter prescribes that the municipality's regulations be consistent with the State's; however, it allows a municipality to be more stringent. The town has adopted the same building code as the State's for public buildings, the Vermont Fire and Building Safety Code; however, is more stringent than the State in its fire regulations. The town has also adopted the International Residential Code to regulate residential development that is not regulated by the State. Chapter 83 also defines the powers of the Building Inspector and appeals of the Inspector's decisions.

Activities

The building division is staffed by two full-time employees: the Buildings Inspector and the Administrative Assistant. The Administrative Assistant position turned over in 2014 and was vacant for over three months resulting in senior staff performing the role of the Assistant. It was anticipated that 2014 would see the appointment of the Wastewater Official as the Assistant Building Inspector however the loss in personnel created backlogs for the Director and Wastewater Official that did not allow for this transition to occur. Fiscal year 2015 will see the training and appointment of an Assistant Building Inspector.

The activities of the building division all fall into the following major categories:

- 1) Building permits and Certificates of Occupancy;
- 2) Enforcement;
- 3) Review & comment on Development Review Board Applications for conformance with building and fire codes;
- 4) Inspection of public infrastructure to ensure conformance with DRB approvals; and
- 5) Public education on code and regulations.

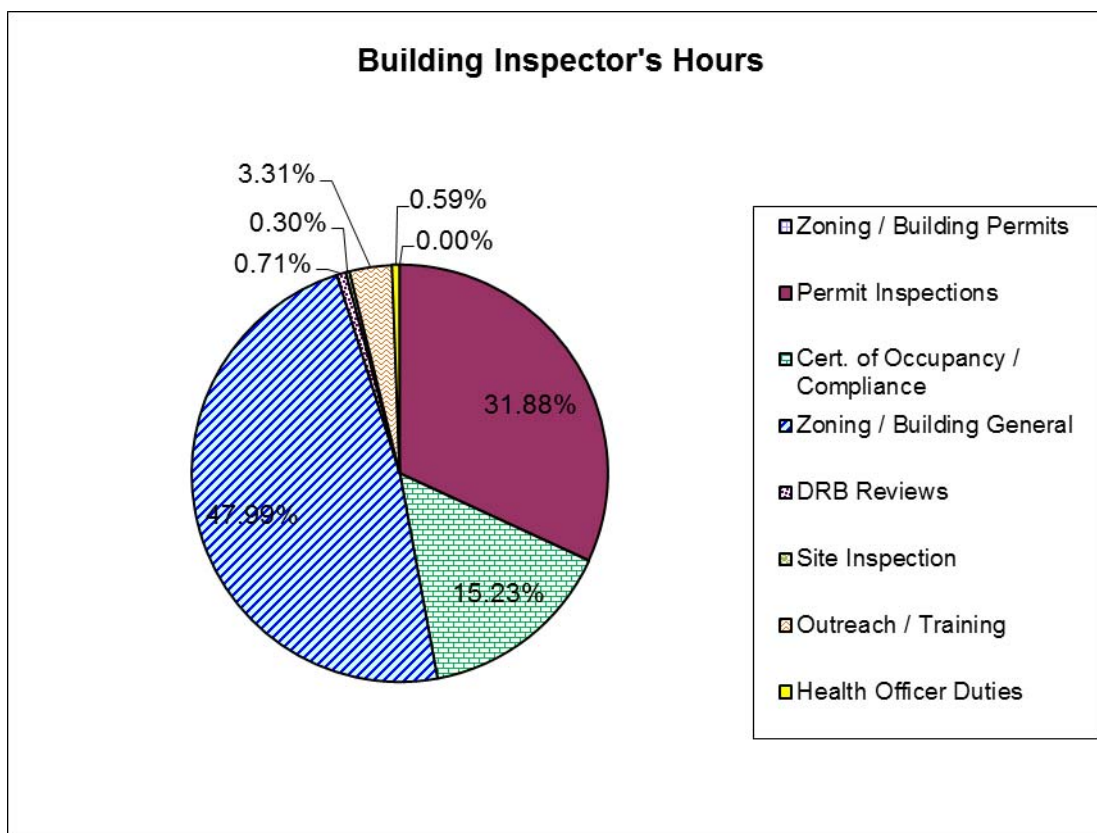
The first two activities are required to conform with 24 V.S.A. Chapters 83 and 117 and the third and fourth are extensions of Development Review Board process. The fifth activity, public education, is a proactive activity to minimize the necessity for enforcement, stream-line permit applications and subsequent inspections. The Building Inspector administers all of these activities and performs regular in-the-field inspections to ensure conformance with the building and fire codes. The Building Inspector also issues permits and has the sole responsibility for activities two through five. The Administrative Assistant receives building permits, circulates the permits for review, performs necessary correspondence for permits, schedules the Inspector, takes in and processes fees for permits, posts building permits within the land records, and tracks compliance requirements for permits such as necessary inspections or re-inspections. The Assistant also provides secretarial functions for activities two through five and serves as the primary attendant for the public counter and general phone inquiries for the department.

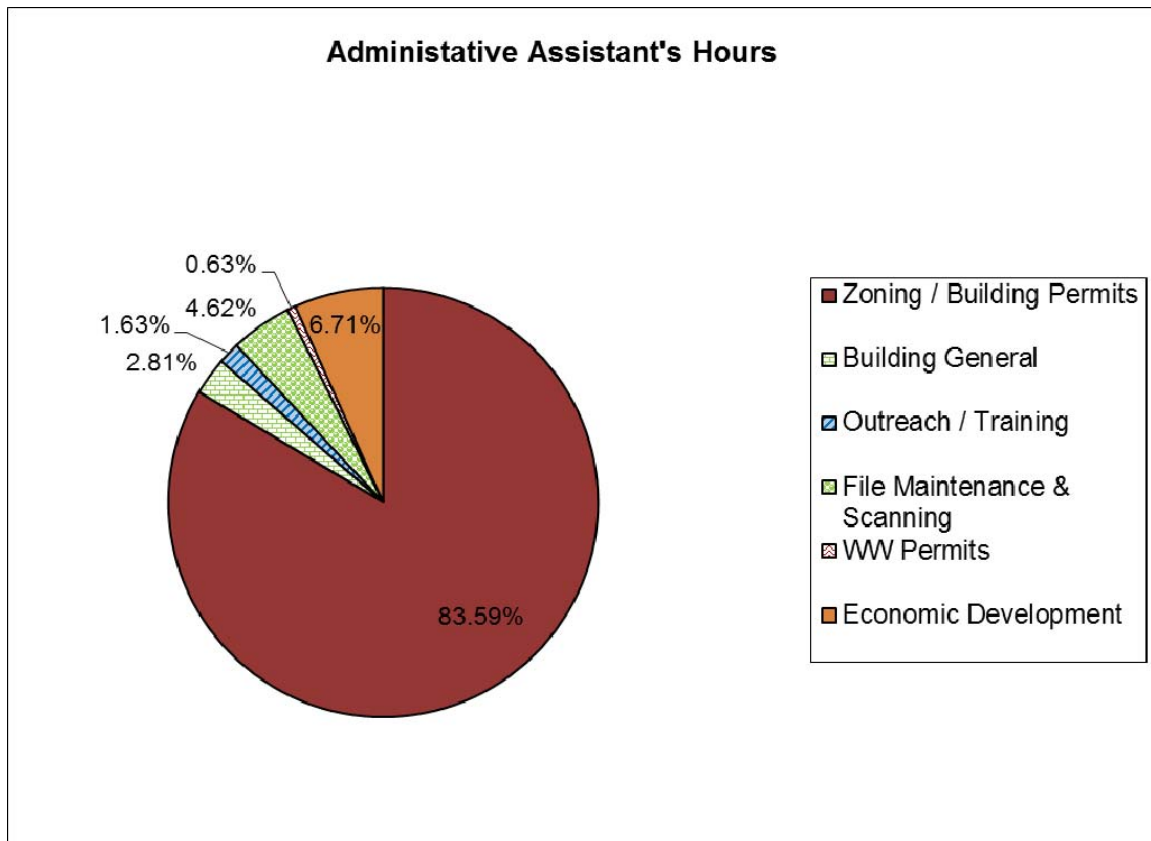
Allocation of Resources

Below are charts of activities performed by the Building Inspector and Administrative Assistant for fiscal year 2014. The Building Inspector's time continues to be almost evenly split between permits and inspections (48% vs. 47%). The number of building inspections continued to increase as new construction starts increased. Often renovations such as decks, pools, and sheds only require one inspection whereas new homes require four or more inspections per permit. Fiscal year 2014 brought an additional duty to the Administrative Assistant as this position now provides support to the Director of Economic Development. It also has become apparent that the Wastewater Official requires assistance in processing the paperwork associated with State Wastewater Permits as the revenue doubled in this category. File maintenance and scanning suffered as these two new items required time and the part-time Records Clerk position in the Planning and Zoning Department was also vacated and not filled. In fiscal year 2015 the Department will need to address the need to digitize existing records with constrained resources as the digitization of records will be crucial to sustaining the viability of online permitting.

Training will continue to be necessary in 2015 for the new Administrative Assistant as well as for the Building Inspector to maintain his National Fire

Protection Association Fire Inspector One or better endorsement which requires 20 hours of continuing education credits annually to maintain. The Inspector must also stay current on the International Residential Code, State codes, and other areas of construction such as new technologies and advancements in energy efficiency. It is therefore recommended that the Inspector receive 20 to 40 hours of training annually. The Administrative Assistant should complete minimal training in these same areas to answer general inquiries from the public when the Inspector is not available and is anticipated to require at least ten hours of training annually. Training time targets are being met although it should be noted that this category has been included with outreach, including the creation of educational materials, in the following charts.



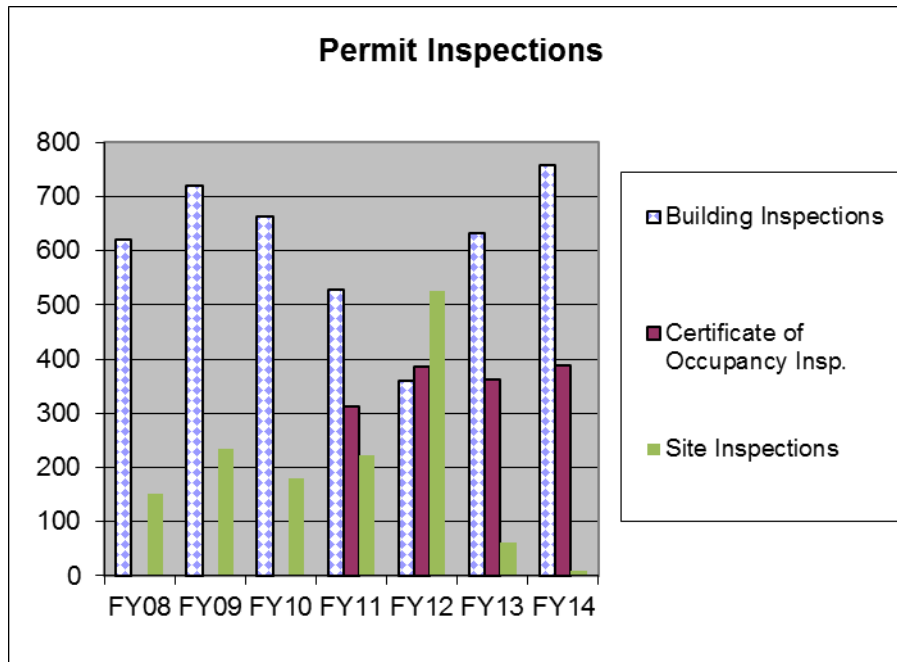


Revenue Sources

The first activity (Building Permits / Certificates of Occupancy) generates revenue through application fees, recording fees, and impact fees where applicable. It is hard to distinguish the revenue of zoning permits from the revenue of building permits as the Department's process combines these permits into one application and one fee. Revenue associated with building permits is therefore described within the zoning division section herein. Enforcement activities (activity two) often result in fines or the reimbursement of legal fees encumbered by the Town. Revenue associated with building enforcement fines are combined with zoning fines and are also described within the zoning division section. Activities three and four produce revenue through DRB application fees which are enumerated in the zoning division section.

The efficiency and output of the building division can be measured in several areas, however, these areas overlap with the zoning division. Permit and enforcement efficiencies and output are therefore described within the zoning division section. Below is a chart of building and site inspections. These are logged by individual visit and reflect the inspector's shift to more building permit inspections than site inspections. The recession of the mid-2000s saw a decrease in speculative construction with many developers preparing sites but not constructing homes until there was the certainty of a buyer. With the

resurgence in the residential market, site development has slowed in favor of construction of residential units. It should be noted that these categories include enforcement inspections and site inspections which can include landscaping or other general inspections such as public infrastructure.



Metrics for Efficiency & Output

As building and zoning permits are intertwined, the metrics of the building division are also often mandated by Title 24 of Vermont Statutes Annotated, Chapter 117. A chart showing the various time requirements and steps for issuing permits (activity one) and the appeal period afforded by right as part of enforcement activities (activity two) is contained within the zoning division section. Appeals of the Inspector's orders that are not explicitly linked to permits are controlled by Section Six of Chapter Four of the Colchester Code of Ordinances. This Section states that such appeals must be filed within five days for the order and require that the matter be heard by the town's Select Board. Comments on Development Review Board applications (activity three) must be made within two weeks of receipt. Inspections for public infrastructure are done on an as-needed basis and in compliance with the Colchester Department of Public Works Standards and Specifications. These call for specific intervals and types of inspections during installation of public infrastructure. These standards were recently revised to require applicants' engineers to inspect and certify the majority of new public infrastructure. Generally all inspections, including those of public infrastructure, are conducted within 24 hours of the request for inspection. At this time, public education activities (activity five) consist primarily of keeping current code sheets and associated handouts available at the counter.

The building division has and will continue to comply with the metrics required for the processing of permits and enforcement as required by 24 V.S.A Chapters 83 and 117 as well as Chapters Four and Seven of the Colchester Code of Ordinances. Each violation investigation begins within 24 hours of the complaint. While each enforcement action requires differing amounts of time to investigate (site visits or legal research may be necessary), once a violation has been determined, the process set forth in state statute takes precedence. Each entity against which enforcement action is taken is allowed 15 days to appeal the decision the Development Review Board (DRB) similar to a permit denial. If an enforcement matter proceeds beyond the DRB to the Environmental Court, the Court's calendar then dictates the timeline for resolution.

Fiscal Year 2015 Priorities

The department's new permitting software was selected in 2013 and the layout, workflow, and other setup related to implementation began in 2014 however full implementation was delayed due to staff turn-over and the need for customizations in the software. It is anticipated that 2015 will see the full implementation of the software including a web portal for on-line applications for building permits. While the software will create long-term efficiencies it will increase the need for staff time in the short-term especially as all existing permits are not digitized and still require file pulls for researchers and site visits. Fiscal year 2015 will therefore require continued staff time to implement the software and scanning of existing records must also be addressed. The following time is anticipated from the building division to achieve the FY14 objectives. Priorities for the building division will include:

1. Continuing to fulfill the requirements and metrics as required by 24 V.S.A Chapters 83 and 117 as well as Chapters Four and Seven of the Colchester Code of Ordinances
Estimated Project Completion: On-going
 - A. *Building / Zoning Permits & General Building Inquiries*
Administrative Assistant 950 hours
Building Inspector 800 hour
 - B. *Building / Zoning Permit & Site Inspections:*
Building Inspector 550 hours
 - C. *Certificate of Occupancy & Compliance Inspections:*
Building Inspector 250 hours
 - D. *DRB Reviews: Building Inspector 25 hours*
 - E. *Deputy Health Officer Duties: Building Inspector 10 hours*
 - F. *Training:*
Administrative Assistant 20 hours
Building Inspector 30 hours

Involved Staff: Building Inspector; 1800 hours Administrative Assistant 2,050 hours

2. Implement Edgesoft Tablet and Field Inspection Efficiencies

Estimated Project Completion: June 2015

Building Inspector 80 hours

Administrative Assistant 200 hours

3. Increase public education & awareness of building & fire codes

Estimated Project Completion: On-going

Building Inspector 20 hours

Administrative Assistant 25 hours

4. Wastewater Permitting Support

Administrative Assistant: 150 hours

5. Economic Development Support

Administrative Assistant: 80 hours

6. File Maintenance and Scanning

Administrative Assistant 175 hours

Wastewater Division

Objectives

The wastewater division administers the Town's on-site septic regulations as codified in Chapter Eight of the Colchester Code of Ordinances and also encompasses the state mandated Health Officer duties as required in Title 18 of Vermont Statutes Annotated Chapter 11. While the Town has regulated wastewater since 1967, the Vermont Legislature created sweeping changes to the State's regulation of wastewater in Act 133 of the 2001 session resulting in the creation of Title Ten, Chapter 64. These changes were implemented over several years beginning in 2002 through 2007. Properties that had previously been exempted from state wastewater permits were brought under the State's jurisdiction, ending municipal oversight of wastewater systems by 2007. On December 13, 2005 the town received approval from the State as a "Delegated Municipality" pursuant to the State Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rules, Subchapter 7 - Delegation. As a result of this delegation prior to subsequent rule changes in 2007, the Town issues all permits required under the State Wastewater System and Potable Supply and retained the right to issue local wastewater permits for tank replacement. Should the Town ever relinquish the delegation, the State would take back its authority and the Town would be forever prohibited from administering local wastewater permits. At this time, the majority of the Town is served by on-site wastewater systems with over 5,000 systems currently in place.

Activities

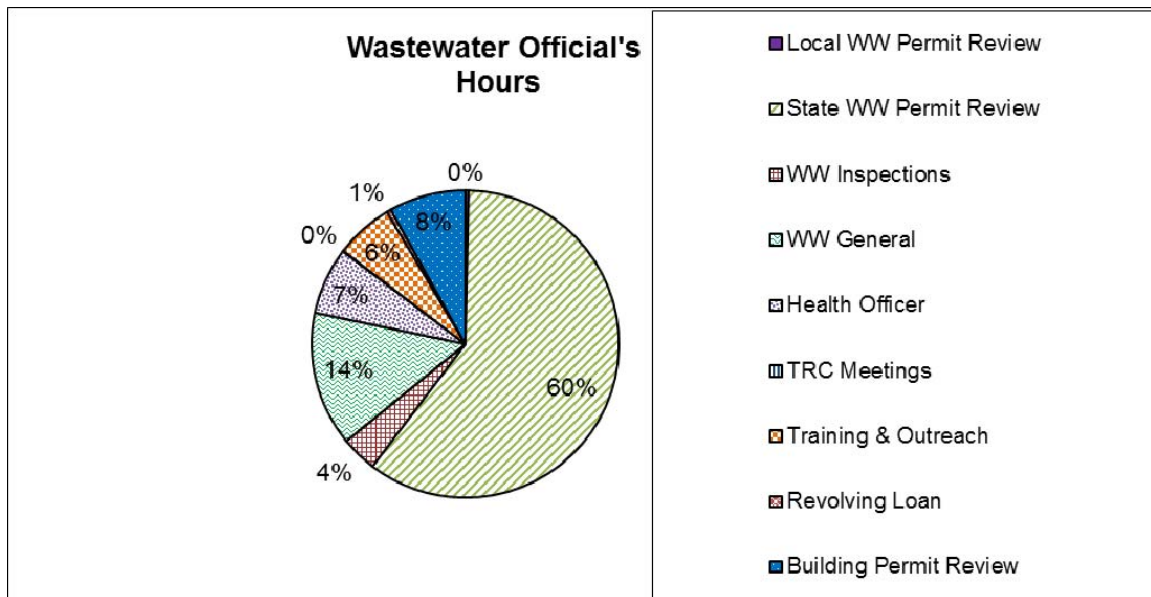
The wastewater division is currently staffed by one full-time Wastewater Official / Health Officer. The work of the wastewater division fall under the following major activities:

- 1) Local Wastewater Permits;
- 2) State Wastewater Permits;
- 3) Health Officer duties and enforcement;
- 4) Administering the Colchester Wastewater Mini-grant & Revolving Loan Fund; and
- 5) Building Permits.

The Official is responsible for administering all of these activities, however, some paperwork support is provided by the department's administrative assistant. The first, second, and portions of the third activities (enforcement) are required as part of the town's "Delegated Municipality" agreement from 2005 and are not currently separated out in accounting for staff time. The duties of Health Officer are set forth in Title 18, Chapters 3 and 7 and are mandated by the State. The administration of the Colchester Wastewater Revolving Loan and Mini-Grant Funds is elective and the administration has decreased in recent years as new loans are referred to the State's loan program and the Town focuses on mini-grants and administration of existing grants. The Official also reviews all building permits for conformance with wastewater regulations.

Allocation of Resources

Below is a chart of activities performed by the Wastewater Official in fiscal year 2014. The Wastewater Official is required to possess Class A and B State wastewater endorsements which require continuing education. It is therefore recommended that the Inspector receive 20 to 40 hours of training annually. Training time targets were met in 2014. An increase in State Wastewater Permits in 2014 is reflected in the Official's increase in hours spent on this task. It should be noted that the increase in State Wastewater Permits and the lack of administrative assistant functions has resulted in a backlog of reporting permits to the State as well as other deferrals in paperwork that is not time sensitive. As permitting increases, it will be a challenge for the Official to continue to keep up with the required paperwork of the State Delegation in 2015. While it is hoped that the full implementation of the software system will assist in creating paperwork efficiencies, the Official will need to spend time in 2015 implementing the software to realize these efficiencies creating a further time constraint for this position.



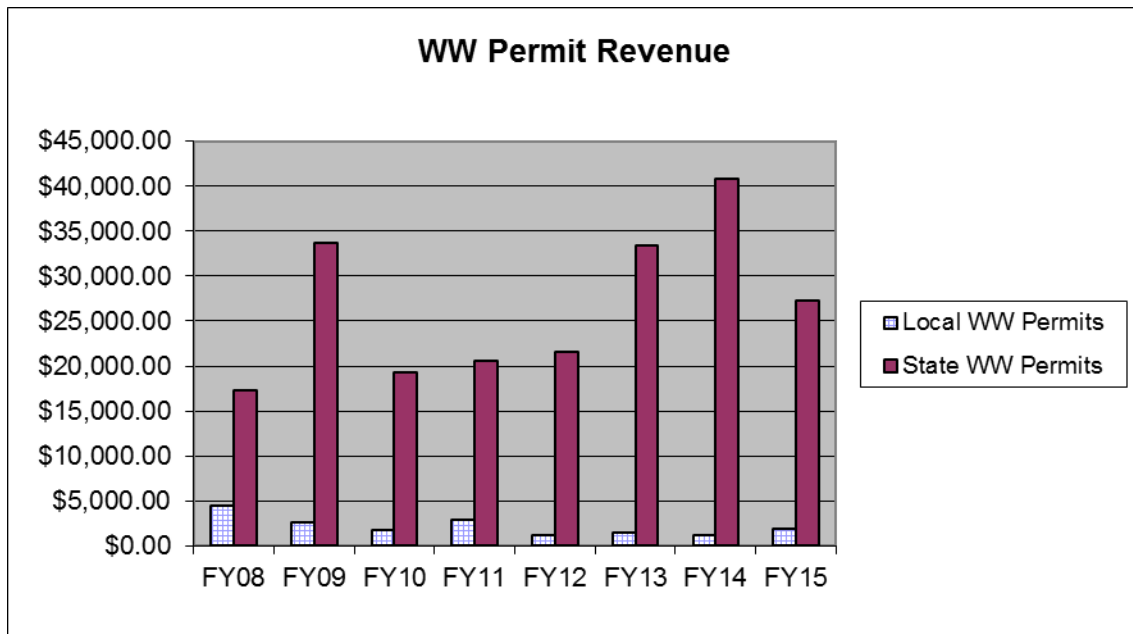
Revenue Sources

The first two and fifth activities (issuance of permits) generate revenue through application fees and recording fees. Enforcement (activity three) often results in fines or the reimbursement of legal fees encumbered by the town. Revenue associated with wastewater and health enforcement fines are combined with zoning and building fines and are also described within the zoning division section. The Health Officer duties alone do not produce revenue. The Town acts passes the funds from the state to applicants for the revolving loan fund and retains one percent of each loan to assist in covering general administrative costs. As building permits are a minor amount of the Official's time, this revenue item is accounted for in the zoning division. The wastewater division revenue accounts are listed in the town's general fund at the following:

100002-341302 Septic Permits

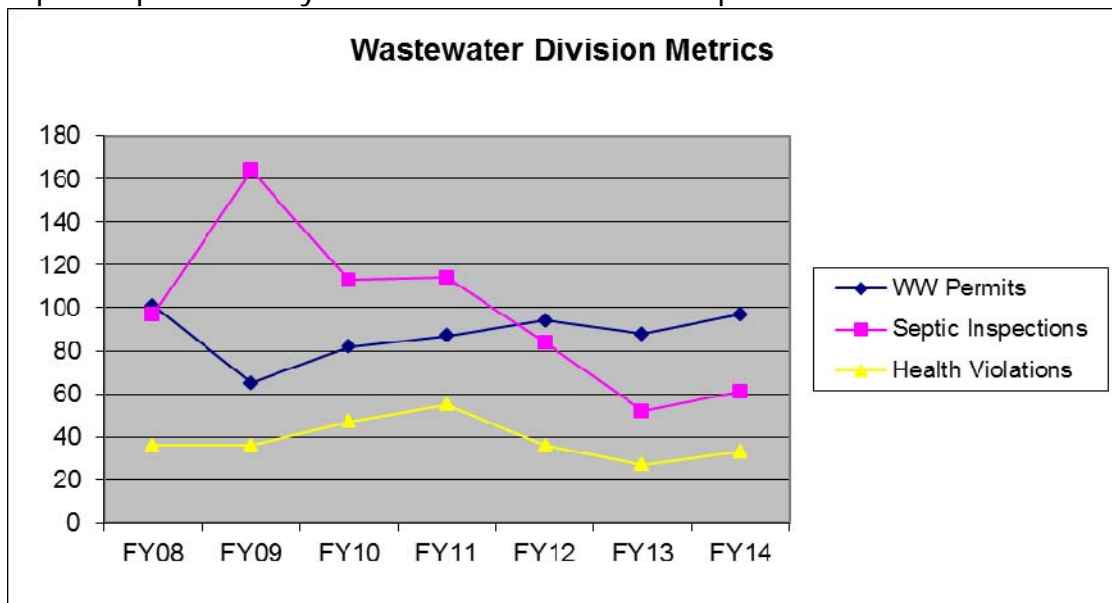
100002-341312 State Wastewater Permits

The following charts represent the actual revenue received in these revenue accounts for the preceding seven years as well as the projected revenue for fiscal year 2014. Revenue in fiscal year 2014 increased as single family home starts increased. It is likely that fiscal year 2015 will see revenue exceed previous expectations for State Wastewater Permits too.



Metrics for Efficiency & Output

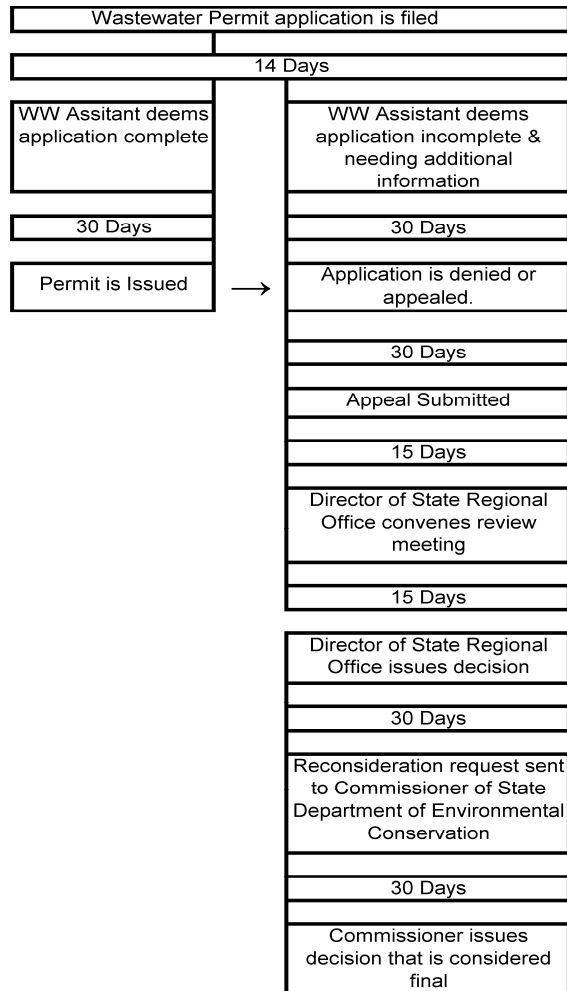
The efficiency and output of the wastewater division can be measured in several areas. The department quantifies local and state permit activity by the number of septic permits issued and septic site inspections. Health Officer output is quantified by the number of violations reported.



The metrics of tasks one and two (Wastewater Permits) are mandated by the State Environmental Protection Rules (see flow chart next page). The duties of Health Officer (activity three) are governed by Title 18 Vermont Statutes Annotated Chapters 3 and 11. Health Officer activities have relatively few prescribed metrics. There are two requirements: 1) the Department of Health

must be informed within 48 hours of issuance of any emergency health orders; and 2) all decisions of the Health Officer may be appealed to the Board of Health (Select Board) within 30 days of issuance. The Board must then issue a decision within 30 days of the hearing conducted in accordance with Chapter 25 of Title 3. Similar to zoning complaints, health violation investigations are initialized within 24 hours of receiving the complaint. Varying time is necessary for resolution depending on the complexity and scope of the complaint. Priority is given to investigating complaints that pose the greatest risk to safety.

Activity four, administering the Colchester Wastewater Revolving Loan Fund, is governed by the State of Vermont's agreement with the town. New loans from this fund have been reduced as a result of a reduction in State funding and the advent of a new State loan program. The existing loans must still be managed and follow-up with lenders in default has been the responsibility of the department in recent years. The Town has transitioned to the implementation of a mini-grant program for on-site wastewater that resulted from the Integrated Water Resources Management Plan. The mini-grant program involves less oversight than the loan program as there is less follow-up and legal action necessary and is therefore less of a burden on the department. This is fortunate as revenue generating State Wastewater Permits have picked up and there is less time from the department to dedicate to these loans and grants. The wastewater division strives to determine individual eligibility for the loan program within two weeks of receipt of a complete application. Enforcement of wastewater rules (activity five) are subject to two different standards, with the enforcement of local wastewater permits subject to the provisions of Chapter Eight of the Colchester Code of Ordinances and the enforcement of State wastewater permits subject to Title 10 Vermont Statutes Annotated Chapters 201 and 211 enforced only by the State. Enforcement proceedings are begun within 24 hours of initial complaint.



Fiscal Year 2015 Priorities

In fiscal year 2014, priorities for the wastewater division will include:

1. Continuing to fulfill the requirements and metrics as required by the State Environmental Protection Rules, Chapter Eight of the Colchester Code of Ordinances, and Title 18 Vermont Statutes Annotated Chapters 3 and 11

Estimated Project Completion: On-going

A. State Wastewater Permits & Related General Inquiries: 1300 hours

B. Health Officer Duties & Enforcement: 130 hours

C. Local Wastewater Permits: 5 hours

D. Wastewater Inspections: 65 hours

E. Training & Outreach: 55 hours

2. Building Permit Review & Assistant Training

Estimated Project Completion: On-going

150 hours

3. Software Implementation

Estimated Project Completion: On-going

50 hours

4. Administer Colchester's Revolving Loan & Mini-grant Funds

Estimated Project Completion: On-going

5 hours

Planning & Administration Division

Objectives

The planning and administration division includes the duties of town planning and department head. Town planning revolves around land use planning as required by the implementation of zoning: setting forth a clear goal of what land uses should occur where in the community and aligning land use regulations to these goals. The administration responsibilities are similar to those of other department heads within the town government and vary to reflect the goals and needs of the administration and legislative body.

The Planning Commission directs the planning division as required by the local adoption of zoning in accordance with 24 V.S.A. Chapter 117:

- 1) The creation and review of a five year municipal land use plan;
- 2) Proposing regulatory changes to zoning and subdivision regulations to align with the municipal plan; and
- 4) The creation and implementation of land use studies.

In recent years, the town has elected to add to planning division duties the administration of the State Growth Center Designation for Severance Corners and assisting in the development of a tax increment finance district for this area. The town has also elected to become a delegated community for Shoreland protection from the State and fiscal 2015 will see the Planning Commission review local Shoreland protection and floodplain regulations.

The administrative duties of the division include:

- 1) The management of department staff;
- 2) The fiscal administration of the department's budget and revenue;
- 3) Oversight of all enforcement and legal matters;
- 4) Ensuring departmental compliance with Town personnel policies and goals;
- 5) Outreach to community, regional and state boards, agencies, and organizations; and
- 6) Applying for and administering grant funds as applicable.

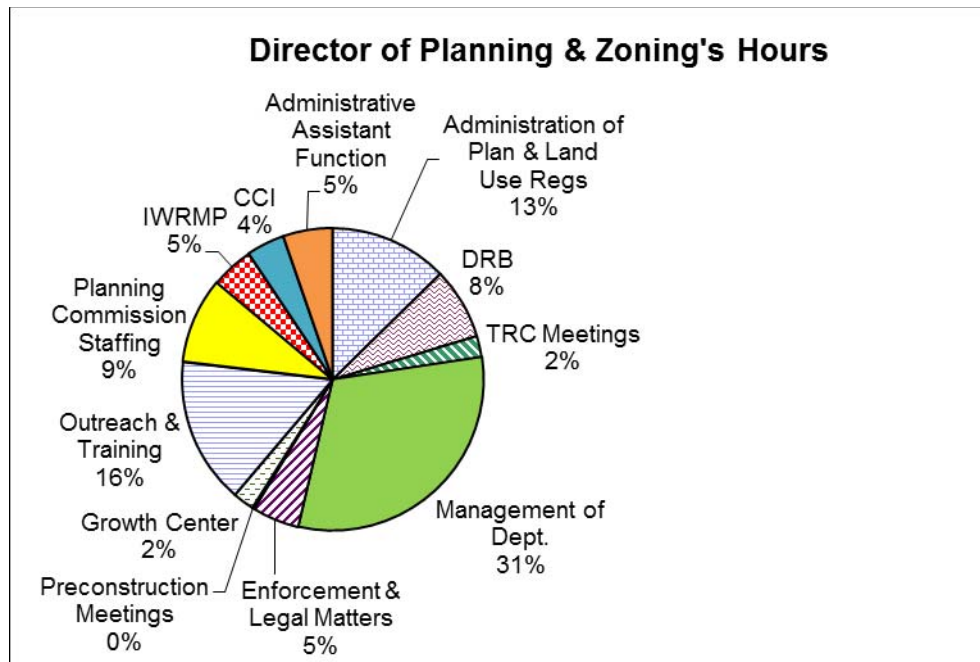
Activities

The division is staffed by one full-time position: the Director of Planning and Zoning. Other staff within the department may be directed to assist in the division's projects as needed. The major activities of the division include:

- 1) Administration of local municipal plan and land use regulations including staffing the Planning Commission and providing the DRB with staff notes;
- 2) Management of department staff and resources;
- 3) Enforcement oversight;
- 4) Administering departmental metrics to align with the goals of Town administration and legislative body;
- 5) Administering the Growth Center Designation and related matters;
- 6) Outreach to community, regional and state boards, agencies and organizations; and
- 7) Applying for and administering grant funds as applicable.

Allocation of Resources

Below is a chart of activities performed by the Director of Planning and Zoning for fiscal year 2014. The job description of the Director states that an American Institute of Certified Planners endorsement is preferred which requires 18 hours of continuing education credits annually to maintain. In order to accumulate these education credits, out of state travel is often necessary. The Director must also stay current on major topics within each division and therefore it is recommended that the Director receive 20 to 40 hours of training annually. Training targets are currently being met. As this time is minimal, training time is included with outreach activities on the chart below.

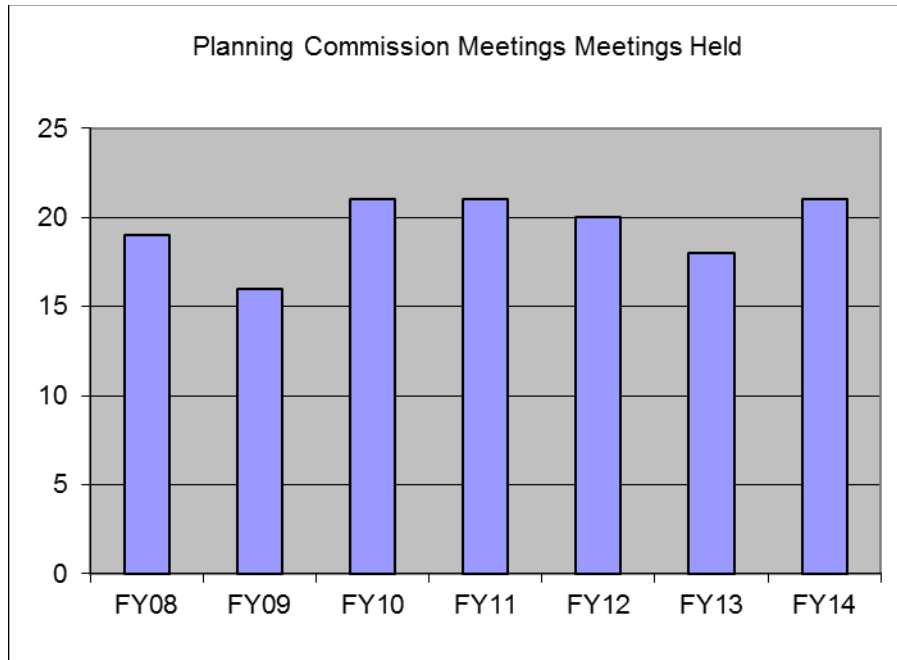


Revenue Sources

The planning and administration division is largely dependent upon the subordinate divisions to produce revenue. Grants are the exception to regular revenue and are generally sought to assist in the implementation of specific projects. While activities such as the Growth Center Designation positively impact grand list growth, this division lacks a primary income source.

Metrics for Efficiency & Output

The efficiency and output of this division can be judged primarily by the efficiency and output of the underlying divisions for which the Director is responsible. The planning duties of the Director overlap the zoning division and are subject to the metrics of the zoning division. At this time, planning is primarily tracked per number of Planning Commission meetings held each year. The Director is also responsible for producing the minutes for the Planning Commission in the same time period as required for the Development Review Board (see zoning division).



The Director's administrative duties include ensuring that the metrics for each underlying division are met and improved wherever feasible. To accomplish this, the Director should provide annual goal analysis and performance action plans for each supervised employee in line with the Department's Strategic Plan and Fiscal Year Work Program. Quarterly check-ins with each employee on their action plans ensure that the employees are supporting the department priorities and can identify any difficulties that employees are having in these activities. The Director is also responsible for producing an annual budget with associated expense and revenue projections and insuring that the department operates within these parameters. To this end, the Director is also responsible for ensuring that enforcement and other legal matters are resolved in a timely matter that minimizes the fiscal and legal liabilities of the department. The Growth Center Designation requires reports to the State Downtown Board for the first two years and then every five years after designation with the five year report due in fiscal year 2014 with review continued into fiscal year 2015. Outreach measures include attending all related organizational meetings and returning phone calls and e-mails within 24 hours whenever feasible unless precluded by legalities. Act 250 participation is also required from time to time by the Director in compliance with Title Ten of Vermont State Statutes Annotated, which set periods to comment on an application or to testify at a hearing on an application.

It is the responsibility of the position to ensure that the department complies with all Town personnel policies and goals. These policies and goals can be found in the Town's regulations, such as the Charter and Colchester Code of Ordinances, the Employee Handbook, the Purchasing Policy, the Code of Ethics,

and the Fiscal Year Budget. Contained in the fiscal year 2015 priorities are performance goals set by the Town Manager for the Director.

Fiscal Year 2015 Priorities

Fiscal year 2015 will see the continued implementation of the Edgesoft software program as well as several new priorities as set forth by the Town Manager. The Director will need to work to identify opportunities for scanning existing records into the software with reduced staffing and increasing volume in permitting.

In fiscal year 2015, priorities for the planning and administration division will include:

1. Continuing to fulfill the requirements and metrics as required by 24 V.S.A Chapter 117

Estimated Project Completion: On-Going

- A. Planning Commission Staffing: Director 175 hours
- B. DRB Support: Director 180 hours
- C. Act 250 Support: Director 10 hours
- D. Administration of Plans and Land Use Regulations: Director 230 hours
- E. Outreach: Director 100 hours
- F. Training 35 hours

2. Ensure that the department complies with all town personnel policies and goals

Estimated Project Completion: On-Going

Director 100 hours

3. Conduct quarterly reviews to ensure compliance with annual goal analysis and performance action plans for each supervised employee in line with the Department's Strategic Plan and Fiscal Year Work Program

Estimated Project Completion: On-Going

Director 70 hours

4. Providing sufficient oversight to the department's fiscal and legal liabilities including revolving loan and mini-grant funds

Estimated Project Completion: On-Going

Director 200 hours

5. Provide support to the Malletts Bay Redevelopment Project through buildout scenarios with RPC including traffic, continued evaluation of Town owned land, and support of Planning Commission in selecting appropriate zoning and implementation tools

Director 150 hours

Estimated Project Completion: On-Going

6. Explore Operational / Organizational Efficiencies Including Oversee Training of Assistant Building Inspector

Director 40 hours

Estimated Project Completion: June 2015

7. Review Shoreland / Floodplain Zoning With Planning Commission

Director 150 hours

Estimated Project Completion: June 2015

8. Continued Edgesoft Implementation & Web Portal

Director 200 hours

Estimated Project Completion: On-going

9. Support Administration in Growth Center Administration, TIF Expiration Evaluation, Revisiting the IWRMP, and considering Sewers with CFD #2

Director 100 hours

Estimated Project Completion: On-going

10. Review Permit Fees for New Construction with Assistant Town Manager

Director 60 hours

Estimated Project Completion: June 2015

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & ZONING

Attachments: See attached FY 2015 PZ Departmental Work Plan for organizational charts and statistics.

Department Overview and Service Objectives

The Colchester Department of Planning and Zoning provides regulatory oversight to construction and development within the community as well as quality of life and environmental concerns. The department's activities are comprised within four major divisions: zoning, building, wastewater, and planning and administration.

- 1) Continuing to fulfill the requirements and metrics as required by 24 V.S.A Chapters 83 and 117 as well as Chapters Four and Seven of the Colchester Code of Ordinances;
- 2) Continuing to fulfill the requirements and metrics as required by the State Environmental Protection Rules, Chapter Eight of the Colchester Code of Ordinances, and Title 18 Vermont Statutes Annotated Chapters 3 and 11;
- 3) Ensure that the department complies with all town personnel policies and goals;
- 4) Conduct quarterly check-ins to ensure compliance with annual goal analysis and annual performance action plans for each supervised employee in line with the Department's Strategic Plan and Fiscal Year Work Program;
- 5) Providing sufficient oversight to the department's fiscal and legal liabilities;
- 6) Software Implementation;
- 7) Continue NFPA and ICC Code training;
- 8) Increase public education and awareness of building and fire code and prevention activities;
- 9) Training the Wastewater Official for the Assistant Building Inspector position;
- 10) Administration of the Colchester Wastewater Revolving Loan and Mini-Grant Funds;
- 11) Additional administrative support for the Wastewater Official and Economic Development Director; and
- 12) Identification of long-term scanning methodologies and practices.

List of Services offered by the Department in order of importance to citizens

- 1) Continuing to fulfill the requirements and metrics as required by 24 V.S.A Chapters 83 and 117 as well as Chapters Four and Seven of the Colchester Code of Ordinances;
- 2) Continuing to fulfill the requirements and metrics as required by the State Environmental Protection Rules, Chapter Eight of the Colchester Code of Ordinances, and Title 18 Vermont Statutes Annotated Chapters 3 and 11;
- 3) Software Implementation;
- 4) Increase public education and awareness of building and fire code and prevention activities;
- 5) Administration of the Colchester Wastewater Revolving Loan and Mini-Grant Funds;
- 6) Additional administrative support for the Wastewater Official and Economic Development Director; and
- 7) Identification of long-term scanning methodologies and practices.
- 8) Providing sufficient oversight to the department's fiscal and legal liabilities;
- 9) Continue NFPA and ICC Code training;

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- 10) Training the Wastewater Official for the Assistant Building Inspector position;
- 11) Ensure that the department complies with all town personnel policies and goals;
- 12) Conduct quarterly check-ins to ensure compliance with annual goal analysis and annual performance action plans for each supervised employee in line with the Department's Strategic Plan and Fiscal Year Work Program;

Have you reviewed the efficiency of operations in your department? Are there any changes that could be made to reduce costs without reducing service to citizens?

In 2010 the Colchester Evergreen Study reviewed the efficiency of operations of our department and recommended several efficiencies and a reduction in staffing. These changes were subsequently *implemented. Due to the scope of changes, the implementation was completed only in fiscal year 2013* with the previous Administrative Assistant assuming the duties of the Wastewater Official and the fees for permits being restructured to reflect more accurately the staff time required to process them. A new online software program began implementation in FY14 and will make permit applications and receipts available online in FY2015. While temporarily increasing strain on the staff, it should result in long term efficiencies as the department moves to a paperless environment. Until the effects of all of these changes can be quantified and measured, no additional modifications to the department are recommended.

If you were asked to reduce your budget, how would you accomplish this? What, if any, services would have to be cut?

FY15 saw several reductions in the department's budget as the part-time records clerk position was not filled and professional development money was decreased 50%. Any further cuts would have a direct impact on the delivery of services. The services that the department provides are either required of the Town by Statute or revenue generating. An alternative to cuts would be to increase fee for services.

If more funding were available, what would you request in FY 16 and why?

If more funding was available, the scanning / conversion of paper documents into the new software system would be expedited by outsourcing.

Opportunities & Adverse Conditions Affecting the Department in FY 16

Adverse Conditions: While it cannot be predicted with certainty, enforcement action and other litigation will necessitate responses from the Town, creating legal expenditures. A variety of projects, such as the Malletts Bay Redevelopment Project, implementation of the 2015 Town Plan and an increase in the number of permits will continue to burden staff. Continued restrictive state permitting and the unknown future of a major employer, IBM, may hamper building permit revenue. In FY10 scanning of existing permits and files was ceased as part of the department's reorganization. Efforts begun in FY12 to resume scanning hopefully will offset a recent trend toward decreased efficiency and increased need for storage. However, these efforts were temporarily ceased in FY14 due to staff turnover and a budget failure. Staffing continued a trend toward attrition in FY14 and it is hoped that FY15 will see staffing within the department stabilize

Opportunities: The department's new permitting software was rolled out in 2014 however the need for customizations and relationships with the Town's other software platforms has delayed the public

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interface portion of the software into FY2015. It is anticipated that 2015 will include adaptation to the new software and many changes to internal processes. While the result of the software implementation should be internal efficiencies, the move into a "paperless" environment will include several redundancies at first as both paper and digital formats will need to be accommodated. The new software will streamline the permitting process and create transparency. By the end of FY2015 all new permits will be available for public viewing on-line. The creation of a Department Strategic Plan and implementation of employee performance reviews helps to orient and focus the staff. The development of departmental job manuals and policies also assists in achieving transparency and predictability in the process. With the revision of permit fees in fiscal year 2013 and possibly again in FY15 it is also hoped that the department can make further movement toward long-term self-sufficiency.

Opportunities & Adverse Conditions Affecting the Department in Next 5 Years

Adverse Conditions: The development of the growth center has stagnated as only one of the four quadrants is under construction and no certainties exist as to when two of the other permitted quadrants will begin construction. The majority of development within the Town, per the State's growth center approval, should be occurring within the growth center. The lack of commercial development within the growth center is concerning for revenue (both PZ and grand list) as well as compliance with the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Should Fire District Two implement sewers, and if land use plans not updated to take advantage of this infrastructure, the Town could lose an opportunity for grand list expansion.

Opportunities: Implementing transportation improvements at Exit 16 and Severance Corners will foster growth within the area and create new opportunities for business and development. Moving forward on land use plans for the Bay in advance of sewerage the area will put the Town in position to determine the type of development it wants. Streamlined on-line permitting and an active Economics Development Department will help make Colchester known as the place to do business in Northwestern Vermont.

Proposed Changes to the Department in Next 5 Years (indicate year of change)

Personnel Changes and Estimated Cost: No changes are proposed to personnel, although it is assumed that benefits and cost of living increases will gradually increase these costs over the next five years.

Services Changes and Cost or Revenues: Permit fees were adjusted in fiscal year 2013 to offset staff time spent in processing the permits. While it was recommended that the fees be re-examined approximately every five years with the next time occurring in fiscal year 2018, staff will work with the CFO in 2015 to reexamine fees related to new units and structures. Revenues from permits have gradually increased over the past five years and are expected to do the same over the coming five years (see attached work plan graphs).

Other - with associated Costs or Revenues: No changes are proposed; however, the cost of utilities and gasoline will likely create minimal budget increases in the next five years.

Indicate What Revenues your Department receives and any Changes in Departmental Revenues in FY 15 (Indicate when fees were last updated)

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Permit fees were adjusted in fiscal year 2013 to better reflect staff time spent in processing the permits. See attached work plan detailing revenues and trends. It is likely that the estimated revenue for fiscal year 2014 will be exceeded based upon the preceding two fiscal years. A conservative estimate for revenue for 2015 is a slight increase above the projected 2014 revenues based upon a strengthening local economy.

Departmental Personnel

	<u>FY 10</u>	<u>FY 11</u>	<u>FY 12</u>	<u>FY 13</u>	<u>FY 14</u>	<u>FY 15</u>
Number of full-time equivalent positions	7.75	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.0

Changes in Personnel over the last 5 years: The Department has downsized from a staff of nine to a staff of 7.75 FTEE's to 6.0 FTEE's. Downsizing occurred when staff retired or otherwise vacated positions and existing staff was reorganized to cover the core elements of the department.

Explanation of additions or reductions in personnel over the next 5 years (include year of potential change): None.

Request for New Equipment over \$5,000 in FY 16 and the next 5 years (Indicate year of request):

Justification: In FY16, a sum of \$10,000 is requested to scan existing departmental property files. It is hoped that this amount, coupled with funds from FY2015, will prove sufficient to scan all of the department's planning and zoning files. Staff time will then be necessary to link the new pdfs to the department's software. Once this project is completed, all of the department's files will be accessible on-line.

New Acquisition or Replacement of Existing Equipment? None.

Benefit to Citizens: Citizens will be able to examine their property files on-line to determine septic system locations or assist in applying for new permits. Lawyers, researchers, appraisers, engineers, and other professionals will be able to access files immediately on-line and will save time and money with file requests and traveling to the Town Offices for review of the file. This will hopefully decrease costs of these professionals to citizens and expedite services. The long-term benefit to citizens will be greater efficiencies for department staff as less time is spent pulling, organizing, and refiling property files. Without scanning, long term file storage will continue to grow and consume square footage in the Town Hall that could be otherwise used for meeting space or personnel. Prior to the construction of the Town Hall, the department rented a cold storage trailer for many of the department's files.

Approximate Cost: \$10,000

Summary

This strategic plan and work program are intended to provide greater transparency in government functions and to depict clearly the activities of the department for budgeting purposes. While the plan and program outline the direction of the Department of Planning and Zoning for the immediate and long term, discretionary activities may be subject to change based upon the needs of the Town administration and legislative body. It is hoped that this document will provide general day-to-day guidance for the operation and oversight of the department and provide employees with ownership and accountability in their actions. In 2015, a high priority will continue to be implementing new permitting software to enhance customer service and internal efficiencies long-term. As always, the Department remains committed to excellent customer service, encouraging civic involvement, and assuring compliance with all applicable regulations. In summary, the fiscal year 2015 priorities for the department are:

- 1) Continuing to fulfill the requirements and metrics as required by 24 V.S.A Chapters 83 and 117 as well as Chapters Four and Seven of the Colchester Code of Ordinances;
- 2) Continuing to fulfill the requirements and metrics as required by the State Environmental Protection Rules, Chapter Eight of the Colchester Code of Ordinances, and Title 18 Vermont Statutes Annotated Chapters 3 and 11;
- 3) Ensure that the department complies with all town personnel policies and goals;
- 4) Conduct quarterly check-ins to ensure compliance with annual goal analysis and annual performance action plans for each supervised employee in line with the Department's Strategic Plan and Fiscal Year Work Program;
- 5) Providing sufficient oversight to the department's fiscal and legal liabilities;
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COLCHESTER PROPOSED FY 2016								
Account	FY 12 Actual	FY 13 Actual	FY 14 Budget	FY 14 Actual	FY 15 Budget	FY 16 Budget	\$ Inc/Dec from FY 15	% Inc/Dec from FY 15 Budget
PLANNING/ZONING								
SALARIES	315,389	288,098	322,479	313,862	320,156	328,160	8,004	2.5%
SALARIES - PLAN COMM/ZON BD	3,774	3,450	4,016	3,776	4,102	4,102	(0)	0.0%
OVERTIME	4,018	1,253	3,089	1,879	3,000	2,000	(1,000)	-33.3%
HEALTH INS	59,664	62,999	72,088	67,497	74,118	86,255	12,137	16.4%
DENTAL INS	4,329	5,852	6,804	5,686	7,520	7,231	(289)	-3.8%
LIFE/DIS	4,458	4,518	4,943	4,131	4,872	4,684	(188)	-3.8%
INSURANCE-PACIF/CL/BOND/E&O	11,253	9,948	10,705	9,814	11,228	10,766	(462)	-4.1%
SOCIAL SECURITY	25,019	22,817	25,213	24,949	25,035	25,571	536	2.1%
RETIREMENT	22,118	20,415	20,386	19,464	20,324	20,832	508	2.5%
UNEMPLOYMENT	3,202	3,160	4,295	3,244	3,168	3,326	158	5.0%
WORKER'S COMPENSATION	2,886	2,151	3,100	2,882	2,748	3,503	755	27.5%
PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT	10,388	6,698	10,750	2,229	5,350	6,000	650	12.1%
DUES & PUBLICATIONS	1,644	1,531	2,000	1,089	2,000	6,100	4,100	205.0%
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	16,904	26,761	13,000	6,140	13,000	13,000	0	0.0%
LEGAL	32,102	34,017	32,500	27,234	32,500	30,000	(2,500)	-7.7%
Master Plan Rewrite	3,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TELEPHONE	2,194	1,182	1,824	1,444	1,824	1,824	0	0.0%
COMMUNICATIONS	655	521	700	543	700	800	100	14.3%
ADVERTISING-RECRUITMENT	1,164	694	1,000	50	1,000	500	(500)	-50.0%
ADVERTISING-Public Meetings	2,323	1,959	2,500	1,556	1,500	1,600	100	6.7%
PRINTING & BINDING	1,569	1,008	1,500	2,132	1,300	1,300	0	0.0%
OPERATING SUPPLIES	4,287	4,722	5,000	2,375	5,000	4,000	(1,000)	-20.0%
POSTAGE	2,083	1,722	2,300	1,598	2,000	1,800	(200)	-10.0%
GASOLINE	606	407	1,000	978	2,040	1,358	(682)	-33.4%
MILEAGE ALLOW & REIMBURSE	271	195	1,000	948	500	1,000	500	100.0%
TECHNOLOGY	5,972	1,569	11,350	33,485	13,350	16,500	3,150	23.6%
VEHICLE MAINT	635	26	1,000	759	1,000	1,200	200	20.0%
GIS	2,480	0	500	12,611	500	500	0	0.0%
3rd PARTY CONSULTANT FEES	0	0	0	0	0	10,000	10,000	
ORTHO PHOTOGRAPHS	0	1,500	0	0	0	0	0	
TRANS TO PARK CAPITAL PLAN	0	10,000	0	0	0	0	0	
Total Planning/Zoning	544,886	519,173	565,042	552,355	559,835	593,912	34,077	6.1%